

**Institut Pasteur**

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**OBJECT : Nomenclature of the AIDS virus**

Dear Harold,

I was thinking to call you or meet with you during my short stay in South California, but unfortunately this turned out not to be possible at last.

I basically agree with your conclusion and I am not far from your proposal, since I proposed LAV for Lymphadenopathy AIDS virus. I am ready to accept H before LAV, although I do not see the real necessity of H (cf. my previous letter). The reasons as to invert the order A and L seem to be not scientific, but political (as you mentioned for LAV).

In contrast to what Flossie Wong-Staal states in her letter to Nature, logic and science are not on the "HTLV" side, since, as felt by the majority of your consultants, an HTLV name will induce confusion and will not fit retrovirus nomenclature. Recent sequence data indicate that the genome structure of LAV (or HLAV) is similar to that of the prototype lentivirus, Visna, in having a large orf and several small orf (one of them with transacting activity) between pol and env genes, and also in sharing the closest sequence homology in two conserved regions of pol (RT and endonuclease), although this homology is not sufficient to explain stable heteroduplex formation (P. Sonigo et al., Cell, in press).

I believe there is now enough data to consider LAV or HLAV as the human prototype of Lentivirinae, HTLV-I and -II remaining in the Oncovirinae subfamily.

Furthermore, recent data presented by Malcom Martin at the Albuquerque meeting, indicate that HTLV-III has indeed the same restriction map (with 7 restriction enzymes) as LAV, in contrast to a ten of others isolates, which all differ, and therefore there is strong evidence that they are the same virus.

You certainly would agree with me that it is highly unethical for a laboratory changing the name of a virus received from the laboratory which was the first to isolate it !

Therefore, for scientific and ethical reasons, I propose again the name of LAV or HLAV, for Human Lymphadenopathy AIDS Virus.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Lnc'.

L. Montagnier, M.D.

Encl. preprint of the Cell paper on Visna